

# 6 TRAIT WRITING

	Ideas and Content: Commentary
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# What is commentary?

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- Your opinion
- Insight into the events of the story, the characters, and the outcome
- The conclusions you came to and how you got there.
- Persuading the reader that your thesis is correct.
- Connects your evidence to your thesis.

# Why is commentary important?

- It argues for and convinces people of the thesis you have come up with.
- Without it, your thesis has nothing to stand on and is useless!

# Where does commentary come from?

- ☐ It comes from you.
- ☐ From your mind and your brain and your opinions.
- ☐ The conclusions you have come to about the story.
- ☐ Drawn from the experiences you've had in your life (with family, friends, etc.).
- ☐ From recognizing patterns in a text (reading between the lines), and presenting those patterns for others to see.

# Opinion

Which is the right  
kind to express?

# Do NOT express:

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- ❑ Matters of personal taste, good or bad:
  - Ex. I hate that book/character/ending/etc.
- ❑ Opinions on the book itself:
  - Ex. This book is dumb. OR That character is an idiot.
- ❑ Opinions that cannot be proved.
  - Ex. *Night is the best book to read to learn about the Holocaust.*

# DO express:

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- Observations made about characters, events, etc.
  - ▣ Della is not a vain person, despite her hair being her most prized possession.
- Conclusions you have come to or patterns you have recognized.
  - ▣ For once, the mirror in the story is not a symbol of vanity. Instead, it represents Della's willingness to put her husband before her own desires.
- The logic of your opinion. This is arguing.
  - ▣ Although the reader reads about Della viewing herself in the apartment's pier glass, it is only when she makes the decision to sell her hair to buy a proper Christmas gift for Jim.

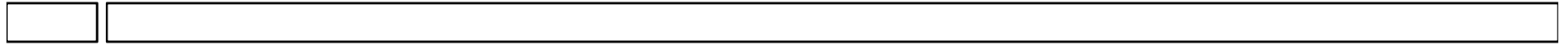
# BAD literary analysis

Elie is dumb for losing faith in God. I don't understand why he would act like that. I would have kept looking to God for strength and patience. But Elie just kept making horrible decisions by being angry at God. The other prisoners were just as dumb for giving up their faith in God. Those guys didn't know what they were talking about. Elie should have kept his faith strong. God didn't deserve his anger.

**Why is it bad?**



# GOOD literary analysis



It is understandable that Elie loses faith in his God. Perhaps it is even what saves his life. Although many in the story who lose their faith in God also lose their will to live, Elie replaces that faith with defiance. Because of his defiance and rebellion towards his own God, he finds a reason to keep surviving, though he himself doesn't realize it. Every day he continues to live is a day that he can prove to God that he can survive without divine help. The need to spite God, to figuratively spit in his face, even, is the fuel that helps Elie to get through every day.

**What makes this good analysis?**